

ASHBURNHAM COA NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2021

32 Main Street

Ashburnham, MA 01430

978-827-5000/SENIOR CENTER HOURS: Monday through Thursday 9 AM – 2 PM CLOSED ON FRIDAY.



COMMUNITY SERVICES AND INFORMATION

- SHINE: Counselor available. Call senior center to make appt or discuss over the phone with Shine counselor.
- Community Legal Aid of Central MA – Free 855-252-5342 or www.communitylegal.org
- Food Stamp Program (SNAP) - 978-665-8700
- Fuel Assistance – 978-342-4520 (NEFWC); 978-342-9407 (Salvation army); 877-563-4645 (Joe for Oil).
- MEALS ON WHEELS is offered Monday, Wednesday & Thursday. Call 978-345-8501 Ext #2 to register.

FREE MEDICAL EQUIPMENT LOANS

CALL OR VISIT THE COA FOR AVAILABILITY. Depends, canes, commode, walkers, etc...

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT MEDICARE COVERAGE?

MEET (OVER PHONE) WITH SHINE COUNSELOR TO GET YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED. OPEN ENROLLMENT ENDS MARCH 31.

CENSUS

PLEASE RETURN YOUR CENSUS FORMS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO TOWN HALL.

COA DONATIONS

The Senior Center has a VERY tight budget. So, any financial support will go a long way!

How to Donate:

We are often asked how folks can donate to the COA. Interested parties can make a check out to the **Town of Ashburnham** and include a note that indicates that you would like your donation to go to the **COA donation Account**. Your donation can be dropped off at our offices located in the Town Hall or mailed to:

32 Main Street, Ashburnham, MA 01430 Attn: COA Donation Account
Your donation is considered tax deductible.

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## SHRINER'S HOSPITAL

We have a wonderful volunteer who drives to Shriner's hospital to drop off can tabs as a donation to the children of Shriners. Don't throw those can tabs away. We will give to volunteer veteran Dan on a monthly basis.



## Grammar Jokes Every Word Nerd Will Appreciate

Q: What's the difference between a cat and a comma?  
A: One has claws at the end of its paws, and the other is a pause at the end of a clause. (Next time you're writing, don't forget this crucial grammar rule.)

Q: Why should you never date an apostrophe?

A: They're too possessive

Q: What happened when the verb asked the noun to conjugate?

A: The noun declined.

Q: Why did Shakespeare only write in ink?

A: Pencils confused him — 2B or not 2B?

When I was a kid, my teacher looked my way and said, "Name two pronouns."  
I said, "Who, me?"



Due May 17, 2021



**Thank you to the Ashburnham Cultural Council for funding**

### **MUSIC FOR SENIORS VIDEO**

Music for Seniors – Classic Songs from Yesteryear

Running time: 53 minutes

Link: <https://youtu.be/laWqxd0kewQ>

Boston-area singer-songwriter Howie Newman performs 16 classic songs, including standards, show tunes and material from artists like Frank Sinatra, the Beatles, Dean Martin, Elvis Presley, Neil Diamond and many others.

It's a sing-along, toe-tapping musical journey from the early 1900s up through the 1970s. Howie also adds trivia, background stories about the songs and a little G-rated humor here and there. The senior center is working with AWCATV to add a program time to watch on your local station. Stay tuned for more details. The above link will allow you to see on your computer or YouTube app on your television.



This program is supported by a grant from the Ashburnham Cultural Council, a local agency which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council, a state agency.

### **Upcoming Events**

**Grab and go event coming in May**

**Thursday June 3, 2021**

MusicDance.edu host Rondae Drafts will be hosting a hip-hop dance class for our seniors. This exercise class is (1) hour. Elders do a complete warm-up and hip-hop class that begins and ends in the chairs. We travel through time on the "Soul

Train” and chair dance to clean cut hip hop and R & B songs. We use creative props such as smiley faces, the drums, and the African maracas to help make our soul train journey come to life. Senior participants will leave feeling more limber.

The Massachusetts Bar Association is excited to invite your senior center to participate in the MBA's Virtual 2021 Elder Law Education Program, which will be held from May 1-31, in celebration of Law Day. Info to follow.

### **“MICHAEL SPEAKING”**

**Speaking of good deals, back when the local COA was advertising for someone to fill the dispatch position, they had no idea what they were getting for their money. Apparently, the local seniors did because they sure kept Mike busy answering their distress calls for help. Word soon spread that along with a nice greeting there were lots of freebies, perks and bennies that came along with the pleasant greeting. Predominantly computer related questions. I bet if he opened up a fix-it shop in his retirement years, he would have no shortage of clients for tech support. But I for one, hope he continues his good deeds right here at our local senior center and we can all enjoy that pleasant greeting, “Senior Center, Michael speaking.”**

**Tally ho,**

**Granny Jan Perrett**

### **TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Ashburnham COA Vans Are Running!**

Vans are doing regular runs to medical appointments and shopping with easy scheduling to the Gardner and other local towns. Please call ahead to schedule a pickup.

Medical trips to hospital and medical centers in Worcester can also be arranged. Thursdays are special shopping trips to Athol: Market Basket, Hobby Lobby. Bring a friend and have some fun. Assistance with loading and unloading packages will be available.

>> Vans will be following all CDC COVID-19 protocols for your safety. So seating is limited. <<

The Ashburnham Council on Aging van will not be used for transportation to medical facilities for clients exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19. Driver has right to refuse transport.

Call 978-827-5000 between the hours of 9AM-2PM to schedule a trip.

# DO YOU NEED HELP WITH MEDICARE COSTS?

MassHealth Buy-in Programs, also called the Medicare Savings Programs, will pay for the Part B monthly premium, **\$148.50** per month.

These programs may also help pay some of your out-of-pocket costs of Medicare.

The Buy-In programs can also help get Medicare Part B for people who only have Medicare Part A.

If you are in a Buy-In program, you will also be automatically enrolled in the Medicare Part D Extra Help program through Social Security, which can help with pharmacy costs.

The information below is the financial eligibility for April, 2021.

|            | Monthly Gross Income | Assets (i.e. savings account) |
|------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| Individual | \$1,771              | \$15,940                      |
| Couple     | \$2,396              | \$23,920                      |

If you feel you may be eligible under these new income guidelines, feel free to call the SHINE Program for more information.

SHINE (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Everyone), is a federally-funded and state-administered program through the Executive Office of Elder Affairs. The Program annually certifies over 700 counselors statewide that provide unbiased, confidential counseling on all aspects of Medicare, related private insurance products, and financial assistance programs. To reach the Central Mass SHINE Program by phone: **508-422-9931** or by email: [info@shinema.org](mailto:info@shinema.org)

For other regions call **1-800-243-4636** and wait for the SHINE prompt.

Visit us at our Central Mass website ([www.shinema.org](http://www.shinema.org)) for useful information and applications for various programs.



**PENSION Action Center**  
SERVING NEW ENGLAND AND ILLINOIS

**PAC provides free assistance  
to people in Illinois and New England.  
Call 1-888-425-6067 for assistance.  
Or visit  
[www.umb.edu/pensionaction](http://www.umb.edu/pensionaction).**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**March 23, 2021**

CONTACT:

Carolyn Assa

[carolyn.assa@mass.gov](mailto:carolyn.assa@mass.gov)

**Consumer Protection Panel Will Address Ways to Protect Against Scams**

**Hosted by the City of Easthampton and the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation**

The Easthampton Mayor's Office will join the [Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation \(OCABR\)](#) and the Easthampton Police Department for a virtual forum designed to inform and empower consumers on the latest scam tactics and how best to avoid them. **Mayor Nicole LaChapelle** and **Undersecretary Edward A.**

**Palleschi** host this event and give an overview of programs and services available from their respective government offices.

The panel will include: **Easthampton Police Detectives Eric Alexander, Andrew Beaulieu and Mark Popielarcz** as well as **OCABR Community Outreach Manager Robin Putnam**. This one-hour webinar will feature experts from each of the partner organizations as they discuss a range of scams related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the upcoming tax season. Attendees will leave with a more robust understanding of how fraudsters operate, and the relevant tools to combat them. This virtual event will be held on **Thursday, 4/8/21, at 12pm**. It is free and open to all. [Register here. https://www.mass.gov/forms/ocabr-and-the-easthampton-mayors-office-present-how-to-recognize-and-avoid-tax-and-covid](https://www.mass.gov/forms/ocabr-and-the-easthampton-mayors-office-present-how-to-recognize-and-avoid-tax-and-covid)

"A lot of people, especially seniors, have felt isolated during the past year due to the pandemic making them vulnerable to scammers. It's important to remember that government agencies will not call or email to ask for your social security or bank account number," said **Easthampton Mayor Nicole LaChapelle**. "We want to make consumers aware of resources that are in place to protect them from those who seek to do them harm or otherwise take advantage of them."

During the forum, attendees will be able to ask questions of the experts and receive real-time responses. The webinar will cover things like COVID-19 related scams, tax scams, and identity theft as well as inform consumers about resources that each agency offers from hotline phone numbers to how to check the reputation of a vendor. Participants will learn to recognize signs of common scams, empowering them to be better able to avoid falling prey to fraudsters.

According to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), imposter scams - where the perpetrator pretends to be someone else in order to get consumers to give them money - are the most common type of scams. Last year, the FTC logged nearly 500,000 complaints about this type of scam totaling \$1.2 billion dollars in loss to consumers. Victims on average lost about \$850.

"The Easthampton Police Department frequently receives calls from residents concerned about suspicious telephone calls and scams. These fraudulent activities are not unique to our community, and unfortunately have become quite common," said **Easthampton Police Detective Eric Alexander**. "We feel that by identifying the most common types of scams directed at consumers and how to avoid them, we are offering a layer of protection to assist in minimizing exposure to their personal and/or financial information."

Robocalls are another way that consumers are defrauded. Americans received just under 46 billion robocalls in 2020. This was a decline of almost 22% from 58.5 billion calls recorded in 2019. Scammers can spoof the phone number they are calling from to make it look like one you know so when they ask you for money, they seem legitimate. Consumers reported losing more than \$3.3 billion to fraud in 2020.

“Criminals are creative and have found ways to stay active during the pandemic. Fraudulent activity reported to my office includes sales of fake COVID-19 test kits, scams that offer early access to the vaccine for a fee, phony COVID-19 vaccine websites made to look like they belong to drug manufacturers, and stimulus check scams in which consumers are asked to share bank and other personal information in order to have quicker access to these funds,” said **Edward A. Palleschi, Undersecretary of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation**. “OCABR seeks to inform and empower Massachusetts consumers and in doing so protect them from scams.”

### **About the Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation**

The Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation empowers Massachusetts consumers through advocacy, community outreach, education programs, and partnerships while ensuring a fair and competitive marketplace for the business its five agencies regulate. In advancing its mission, OCABR continually strives to find a balance between protecting consumer rights and supporting business vitality in the Commonwealth.

### **About the City of Easthampton Massachusetts**

Easthampton is a model small city of the 21st century located in the fertile Connecticut River Valley of Western Massachusetts. It retains its mill town soul while fostering innovation. Community members treasure the abundant resources, dynamic downtown, and vibrant neighborhoods. By adapting, evolving, and making tough choices, Easthampton is sustainable, inclusive, balanced, and a great place to live.

### **Walk Massachusetts Challenge**



Lace up your sneakers - the Walk Massachusetts Challenge is back! This year features more walking options and more prizes! With five individual goals, there's a challenge for everyone - from walking 65 days to walking 692,000 steps - each tied to a fun Massachusetts fact. And 10 lucky people will win a \$50 Visa gift card, 25 people a \$25 Amazon gift card, and 50 people a \$10 Dunkin' gift card. The first 500 people who participate will receive a handy reflective wrist band and sports pack, perfect for carrying your water bottle, keys and phone.

**What's in it for you?** For each person who completes the challenge, your COA gets entered into a drawing to win up to \$1,000 for future programming! So sign people up and encourage them to walk!

#### **Here's how it works:**

1. Individuals sign up at [www.mcoaonline.com/walkma](http://www.mcoaonline.com/walkma)
2. The program runs from May 1 to September 30
3. They choose a challenge from one of 5 different levels - walking for days, time, miles, or steps. There's something for everyone!
4. New this year - we have an online tracking form! They can [track their walking online](#) by creating a user name and password, or use the chart in our printable [walk journal](#).
5. At the end of the challenge, they submit their journal (online, to you, or mail it to Lynn).
6. For each completion, you're entered to win, and so are they!